NEGRO PATOIS AND ITS HUMOR.

Worcester defines patois to be a rustic dialest. It has outgrown that meaning. French, as spoken by the educated class in Montreal; Spanish in the best circles of Chili; Italian in Genoa; German as you recede from Hanover; and even English in the speech of the Chinese millionaires of Victoria and San Franciscoas compared with the dialects of Paris and Madrid, Berlin, Rome, and Oxford—are patois, but surely they are at the farthest possible remove from the rustic. Patois will have a more generic meaning when philologists tell us what is in the organs of speech, or in the brain behind and above those organs, that makes English, or any other living language, always the same in variation and tone in the articulate sounds of any particular race-brogue in the Irishman, accent in the educated German, 'pigeon Yankee' in the Chinaman, or gibberish—not to put too fine a point upon the word—in the native African; why every Hebrew has a voice inclining to the nasal, and every Spaniard to the guttural? why there is a burr on the Scotchman's tongue, and a frog in the throat of the Lon-don alderman? There is a world of knowledge in that direction, which science has to explore and reveal in the future.

In English, as used by the negro, there is something decidedly indigenous. His patois is rustic. It is also something else. It possesses delicacy. There is no language more basid. lucid. Emotions flow in a crystal stream through its simple forms. Meaning is never obscure. Force is never wanting. Shades of thought are defined. Emphasis rests in its place. It is, besides, abundantly humorous. Perhaps this is its characteristic. All over the world—in the slave-pens of Dahomey and the wife-market of Algiers, among the women-thinned plantations of Cuba and the smuggled wretches on the coast of Brazil — the humorous, in every variety, crops out in the negro's speech. There is either no patois so capable of expressing the ludicrous, or no people using a patois so alive to the ridiculous. Nothing was more manifest during the rebellion. The keenest wit, the sharpest retorts, severest satire, and most amusing repartees came from the negro. What, even of Sydney Smith's, is more playful in turn of language than this?—"John," asked an over-zealous chaplain of a "contraband," who had just begun to enjoy the freedom of camp life—"John, have you found the Lord?"

"What's dat you ask, massa?"
"Have you found the Lord, John?" repeated the chaplain. "Bless you, massa," replied John, "is de Lord lost?"

Take also the reply of the grey-haired negro at Centreville, who, after his cabin and the cabins of his neighbors had all been appropriated to army use by Worms, the quartermaster, was asked by a Methodist class-leader if it was not time, at his age, to be preparing for another world?

'Yes, massa," was the response, "tink it is time, for Cap'n Worms gwying to hab all dere is in dis world!"

General Michler tells of a conversation he everheard on going outside his tent during the "March to the Sea." It was between the body-servant and cook. Both had come in late from sermon. The text was from the loaves-and-fishes miracle. "Can't make out,"

said the latter, "how dat miracle was."
"Plain enough," responded the former.
"Don't you see? Seven thousand loaves and five thousand fishes divided 'mong twelve 'postles! Miracle was, dey didn't burst!"

On the coast of Africa, there is noticeable the same tendency towards the humorous in the very interchange of words the negro invariably makes. No American sea-captain ever hired a Sierra-Leone "foreman" to go to the forest and cut him other than merchantable wood. The foreman, however, explain to his laborers that it must be "fat" not all "fat," as would be the case were huge trunks of trees required, but "half-fat, meaning the larger limbs and younger growth, well trimmed of branches. Selecting the wood, he says, "Dis one hab more fat dan t'other.

If the wind blows fresh, it is called "too much saucy;" if the milk has not arrived for breakfast, it is "asleep;" and if a man go, even for a day, to a distance from home, "he even for a day, to a distance from home, lib dere.

As an illustration of this last, take my friend Mr. Johnson, who brought John, his faithful Sierra-Leone body servant, home with him to London. I called at the house his card indicated, and was told by John that Mr. Johnson did not live there. Supposing I had mistaken the residence, I inquired:-

"Can you tell me where he is living?" "He lib at Manchester," was the reply "Oh, indeed! at Manchester! Can you favor me with his address there?"

"Me don't know." "Very disconcerting, very. Pray have you any idea whether he is likely to be in London

again?"
"Oh, yes. Dis evening.'
And v

"This evening! And where do you think I am likely to find him?"

"Oh, you will find him here! "Here? Why, I understood you that he

had left here, and was living at Manchester." "Yes. Dat is true. But he does not sit down at Manchester. He sits down here, When he is at home, he lives here, and, when he is not at home, he does not live here.

But the Sierra Leone native carries his literality still further. A friend once asked a negro from the Cape if his father were living, to which he received an affirmative reply.

"Is he very old l" "So, so; him ole past me?" Which my friend could easily believe, a father being

usually older than his son. "And what does he do?"

"Him no do noting. "Oh, he does nothing; does he live with

"No; him lib in da churchyard." Probably a sexton, whose office is no sinecure in Sierra Leone, my friend thought.

Still he asked further:-"Does he make graves?"

"Oh, no," was the reply. "Him lib in de grave—him lib underground." In like manner the fowls for dinner lib in de pot, the sugar libs in the pudding, the hat kibs upon your head, the pen with which you are writing libs in your hand, and your topcoat, when in use, libs upon your back. In short, the verb "to live" corresponds, in the Sierra-Leone negro-patois, with our verb "to

The native Liberian is even more literal than the Sierra-Leone negro. I say native Liberian, because the American colonists are among the best specimens of the colored race, and think and speak correctly. But the native does neither. He never reasons. Inference is alien to his nature. The adage, "Obey orders, if you break owners," he embodies It would be useless, for example, to command him to "go and get the saddle." Wherever the saddle might be, he would stop, though the groom held the horse waiting at the door, unless you added. "and come back with it. It would be equally useless to ask to "have tea served," unless you added, "and milk and sugar." And then you would have one brought

after the other, unless accompanied by the request, "all at the same time," or, in their own language, "go fetch 'em come; both two;

one time This patois, barbarous as it seems, is adopted by every one on the African coast in speaking to the natives. Its idiom is peculiar.
There are no particles. The words are pregnant with sententious brevity. There is something about their very nakedness that tickles the fancy, and no one ever hears the speech for the first time without laughter. In reference to something wanted, if at hand, but not of importance enough to warrant trouble, a leading Sierra-Leone merchant said to the native boy he had brought with

him to England:-"No go far make trouble; spose 'em lib dere; your eye catch 'em; fetch 'em come; both two, one time"—i. c., "Do not trouble yourself; but if they are at the place indicated, and your eye catches them, bring them back

with you. Their use of the word catch merits notice. A traveller catches a town, the sun catches noon, children catch their ages, and a husband catches his wife. The word denotes, in their use of it, relative merit also:- "Dis one catch past t'oder one," meaning, This is better than

the other. "Past," both as verb and adverb, does a deal of duty:—"Him old past you." "Her handsome past mark," "Me here dis morning past before," i. e., earlier than ever. "No hab past dat one," i. e., I have no more than he.

Even when meaning to be serious, the ludicrous in the negro's language is close at hand. It is seen in the pulpit, listened to in family prayer, noticed in the government of children, and struggles to enter into the angriest contests. To an educated mind, this quick sight for the ridiculous becomes, in argument, an effective weapon. At the last session of the South Carolina Legislature, a bill for preventing railroad accidents was under consideration. Mr. Jacob Piller, the colored member from Eutaw, opposed its passage. He spoke against it. His vote, at every stage, was recorded against its passage. Lobbyists were bribed by his money to work against it. All

would not do, however. The bill was certain to pass. As a last effort, he resorted to ridicule, and, at the moment before the yeas and nays were ordered, moved and carried an amendment that, "when two trains noticed each other approaching a junction, each should come to a full stop, and that neither should start till the other had crossed the point of junction.'

Professor Peters, of Hamilton College, went to Iowa to observe the late eclipse. Having mounted his instruments, he distributed among some extemporized assistants the work each was to do during the occultation. To an old negro he committed the oversight of a large poultry-yard. He was to stand still, remain speechless, keep his attention undistracted, observe how geese, turkeys, ducks, and hens were each variously affected, and report at the conclusion.

"Well, Cato," asked the professor, as the turn came for the poultry-yard report, "how was it?"

"Beats de debbil," said the negro. "When de dark come, goose squat down, turkey fly up apple-tree, and chicken run for de hole in barn. How long you know dis ting was a-comin', fessor?

"More than a year," replied the professor.
"Beats de debbil," responded Cato. "Here
you, 'way in New York, knowed a year ago what dese chick'ns was gwine to do dis berry afternoon, and you nebber see de chick'ns afore nudder."

Many years since, in a country village of Massachusetts, Roberts, a colored man, on the ground of having been recently converted at a protracted meeting, came for a subscrip tion towards an overcoat, of which he was sadly in need. A dollar was given him. Old Roxy, our fat cook, shook her head, but said nothing. Before spring, Roberts was arrested and convicted of larceny. When Roxy heard of it, she exclaimed, "Now, massa, you just remember dat, and never gib money to any nigger what gets pious in de winter.'

Among the gambling-houses of Washington is one of humble pretensions, standing on the banks of the canal. It is frequented by negroes only. Its rules are stringent. A colored policeman, supposed to be in the secret, is posted near by. There is rarely disorder. The croupier is well known as fellow of infinite jest. Stakes above twenty-five cents are forbidden. Ignorant of this feature of the play, a Baltimore colored man, the other night, laid a dollar on the table. It was not noticed at first, and the game was going on, when Mr. Brutus caught sight of the unlawful stake. Stretching himself to his full height, and looking sternly around, he

"What's dat? Who put dat dere? Take dat off dis table? You s'pose a Rosschild own In the schools for colored children in

Washington a wonderful work is going The school-houses are thronged. Judicious and capable teachers have charge. Attendance is punctual. There could hardly be more manifest improvement. In cleanliness, manners, behavior, diligence, and desire for knowledge, the children compare well with any school-children in the city. A friend and visitor, an officer in the army, said jocularly to a bright-eyed mulatto girl. the other day, as he was leaving, "Now, be a good girl, Betsy, and mind that you love your mother and hate snakes."

The child looked serious for a moment, in thought of the strange advice, and then replied:-"You must not tell that to the little snakes, for they must love their mothers

During the war loyalty and godliness were almost synonymous with the native colored population of the national metropolis. There was no half-way standing-place. Secession was the work of Satan. To falter in belief of success was to fall from grace. Toleration towards the Southern people was backsliding. Men who doubted were prayed for. Men who denied the faith that the colored man was to be a freeman were excommunicated. "Do not go," said a colored preacher, when a portion of his flock proposed to settle in a part of Virginia abandoned by the Rebels; "you cannot sink a well, nor plant a tree, nor dig a cellar; nor open a grave, in all dat place. It is all secesh. De berry ground is infected. If you go down one foot, you come to hell." It is hardly necessary to say that project was abandoned. - Appleton's

-Michigan last week had a chess "tourna-ment" and a State skating "carnival." Do words mean anything in these days?

-Wendell Phillips is to deliver the eration in Boston on the 5th of March, the centennial an-niversary of the "Boston Massacre." The Kentucky House of Representatives has passed a bill substituting imprisonment for stripes as a punishment for crime. Now what

-The Illinois Constitutional Convention has been "startled" by a committee's report that the knives furnished the members of the last Legis-lature cost \$8.25 apiece.

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No. 2. Ordinary letter size, 3 1-16 by 5½ inches, of white, buff, canary, or cream-colored paper, or in such proportion of either as may be required.

No. 3. Full letter size (ungummed on flap, for circulars), 3½ by 5½ inches, of the same colors as No. 2, and under a like condition as to the proportion of each.

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by by 9% inches, of buff or manilla paper.

All the above envelopes and wrappers to be embossed with postage stamps of such denominations, styles, and colors, and to bear such printing on the face, and to be made in the most thorough manner, of paper of approved quality, manifestimed speciality.

of paper of approved quality, manufactured specially for the purpose, with such water marks or other de-vices to prevent imitation as the Postmaster-General

rices to prevent initation as the Postmaster-General may direct.

The envelopes to be thoroughly and perfectly gummed, the gumming on the flap of cash (except for circulars) to be put on not less than haif an inch in width the entire length. The wrappers to be gummed not less than three-fourths of an inch in width across the end.

All envelopes and wrappers must be banded in parcels of twenty-five, and packed in strong pasteboard or straw boxes, each to contain not less than two hundred and fity of the letter or extra letter size, and one hundred each of the official or extra official size, separately. The newspaper wrappers to be packed in boxes to contain not less than two hundred and fifty each. The boxes are to be wrapped and scaled, or securely fastened in strong manilla paper, so as to safely bear transportation by mail for delivery to postmasters. When two thousand or more envelopes are required to fill the order of a postmaster the straw or pasteboard boxes containing the same must be packed in strong wooden cases, well strapped with hoop-fron, and addressed; but when less than two thousand are required, proper labels of direction, to be furnished by an agent of the Department, must be placed upon each package by the contractor. Wooden cases, containing envelopes or wrappers to be transported by water routes, must be provided with suitable water-proofing. The whole to be done under the inspection and direction of an agent of the Department.

The envelopes and wrappers must be furnished and delivered with all reasonable despateh, complete in all respects, ready for use, and in such quantities as may be required to fill the daily orders of post-masters; the deliveries to be made either at the Post-masters; the deliveries to be made either at the Post-

and delivered with all reasonable despatch, complete in all respects, ready for use, and in such quantities as may be required to fill the daily orders of postmasters; the deliveries to be made either at the Post Office Department, Washington, D. C., or at the office of an agent duly authorized to inspect and receive the same; the place of delivery to be at the option of the Postmaster-General, and the cost of delivering as well as all expense of packing, addressing, labeling, and water-proofing, to be paid by the contractor.

the contractor. Bidders are notified that the Department will require, as a condition of the contract that the envelopes and wrappers shall be manufactured and velopes and wrappers shall be manufactured and stored in such manner as to ensure security against loss by fire or theft. The manufactory must at all times be subject to the inspection of an agent of the Department, who will require the stipulations of the centract to be fathfully observed.

The dies for embessing the postage stamps on the envelopes and wrappers are to be executed to the satisfaction of the Postmaster-General, in the best style, and they are to be provided, renewed, and kept in order at the expense of the contractor. The department reserves the right of requiring new dies for any stamps, or denominations of stamps not now

department reserves the right of requiring new dies for any stamps, or denominations of stamps not now used, and any changes of dies or colors shall be made without extra charge.

Specimens of the stamped envelopes and wrappers now in use may be seen at any of the principal post offices, but these specimens are not to be regarded as the style and quality fixed by the department as a standard for the new contract; bidders are therefore invited to submit samples of other and different qualities and styles, including the paper proposed as well as the manufactured envelopes, wrappers, and boxes, and make their bids accordingly.

accordingly.

The centract will be awarded to the bidder whose proposal, although it be not the lowest, is considered most advantageous to the Department taking into account the prices, quality of the samples, workmanship, and the sufficiency and ability of the bidder to manufacture and deliver the envelopes and wrappers in accordance with the terms of this advertisement; and no proposal will be considered unless accompanied by a sufficient and satisfactory guarantee. The Posamsster-General also reserves the right to reject any and all bids, if in his judgment the interests of the Government require it.

Before closing a contract the successful bidder may be required to prepare new dies, and submit impressions thereof. The use of the present dies may on the continued.

may be required to prepare new dies, and submit impressions thereof. The use of the present dies may or may not be continued.

Bonds, with approved and sufficient surcties, in the sum of \$200,000, will be required for the faithful performance of the contract, as required by the seventeenth section of the act of Congress, approve the 26th of August, 1842, and payments under said contract will be made quarterly, after proper adjustment of accounts.

The Postmaster-General reserves to himself the right to annul the contract whenever the same, or any part thereof, is offered for sale for the purpose of speculation; and under no circumstances will a transfer of the contract be allowed or sanctioned to any party who shall be, in the opinion of the Postmaster-General, less able to fulfill the conditions thereof than the original contractor. The right is also reserved to annul the contract for a failure to perform faithfully any of its stipulations.

The number of envelopes of different sizes, and of wrappers issued to Postmasters during the fiscal year ended June 20, 1869, was as follows, viz.:—

ended June 20, 1869, was as follows, viz.;— No, 1. Note size—1,114,000. No. 2. Ordinary letter size; (not heretofore No. S. Full letter size, (ungummed, for circulard 4,120,000. No. 4. Full letter size—67,367,500. No. 5. Extra letter size, (ungummed, for circulars)

No. 5. Extra letter size, (angularia--345,500. No. 6. Extra letter size—4.204,500. No. 7. Official size—604,650. No. 8. Extra official size—1700.

No. 8. Extra omena size—1400.
Wrappers—5,090,250.
Bids should be securely enveloped and scaled marked "Proposals for Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers," and addressed to the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, Post Office Department, Wash-

ington, D. C. JOHN A. J. CRESWELL, 1 11 eodtM1 Postmaster General. PROPOSALS FOR PURCHASE OF RIFLED

BURRAU OF ORDNANCE,

Burrau of Ordenance,
NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, January 4, 1870.
Sealed Proposals for the purchase of 30-pounder and 20-pounder Parrott Rifles, with Carriages, Implements, and Projectiles, now on hand in the Navy Yards at Portsmonth, N. H.; Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Norfolk, will be received at this Burcan until 12 o'clock noon, January 31, 1870.

In the aggregate there are about 396 Guns, 354 Carriages, and 96, 157 Projectiles. Schedules in detail of the articles at each yard will be furnished on application to this Bureau.

Bidders will state the number of guns, carriages, implements, and projectiles they desire to purchase at each yard separately, specifying the calibre of gun, kind of carriage, whether broadside or pivot, and the kind of projectiles.

The guns, etc., will be delivered at the respective navy yards, and must be removed by the purchaser or purchasers within ten days after the acceptance of his or their bid. But ne deliveries will be made of any article until the parties purchasing shall have deposited with the paymaster of the navy yard the full amount of the purchase money in each case.

Many of the guns are new, and all are services

Many of the guns are new, and all are services able. Bidders will therefore offer accordingly. No offer for these articles as old iron or wood will be considered.

The Bureau reserves the right to reject any or all bids which it may not consider to the interest of the Government to accept.

Proposals should be endorsed on the envelope "Proposals for Purchase of Rided Cannon, etc."

A. LUDLOW CASE,

1 8 watt Chief of Bureau.

DR. M. KLINE CAN CURE CUTANEOUS

Mouth, and Nose, Sore Legs, and Sores of every conceive, ble character. Office, No. 2 S. ELEVENTH, between the character of the streets.